

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Rule 1 -- Date of Meeting

The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council shall meet every year in regular session.

Rule 2 -- Emergency Session

Emergency sessions invoked under General Assembly Resolution 377 A (V) shall be immediately convened upon the request of the Secretary-General.

Comment -- General Assembly Resolution 377 A (V), known as the "Uniting for Peace Resolution," allows the Security Council, in the event of a veto, to refer an issue to the General Assembly Plenary. Such a motion requires the affirmative vote of seven (7) Members and is not subject to a veto. Security Council powers such as mandatory sanctions or military action may not be exercised by the General Assembly. Any General Assembly resolutions voted upon under this procedure require a two-thirds majority for passage.

Rule 3 -- Emergency Special Session; Agenda

Notwithstanding the provisions of any other rule and unless the General Assembly decides otherwise, the Assembly, in the case of an emergency special session, shall convene to discuss only the item under consideration.

Rule 4 -- Delegations

The delegation of a Member State shall consist of no more than two representatives in any committee.

Comment -- Regardless of the number of representatives, a Member State has only one vote in each committee in which it is a member.

Rule 5 -- Credentials

The credentials and the names of representatives of Member States shall be submitted to the Secretary-General if possible not later than one week before the opening of the session.

Rule 6 -- Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee shall be composed of a representative of each of those Member States elected to serve on the Credentials Committee of the current session of the General Assembly. It shall examine the credentials of representatives and report without delay.

Comment -- The Credentials Committee is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all representatives seated at the United Nations are in fact representative of the people of that nation. The credentials of any representative may be referred to the Credentials Committee, which meets at the end of the last regular committee session. The Credentials Committee will submit its recommendation, in resolution form, to the General Assembly Plenary for its decision. The Credentials Committee of the conference shall be composed of the same nations as the Credentials Committee of the current session of the United Nations.

Rule 7 -- Provisional Admission to a Session

Any representative to whose admission a Member has made objection shall be seated provisionally with the same rights as other representatives until the Credentials Committee has reported and the General Assembly has rendered a decision on the matter.

Rule 8 -- General Committee; Composition

The General Committee shall be composed of a representative of each of those Member States which have been elected to serve as the President of the General Assembly or the Vice-President or the Chairman of a Main Committee at the current session of the General Assembly. No two Members of the General Committee shall be representatives of the same Member State and the General Committee shall be so constituted as to ensure its representative character.

Comment -- The General Committee of the conference shall be composed of the same Member States as the General Committee of the current session of the United Nations.

Rule 9 -- General Committee; Functions

The General Committee shall convene prior to the final plenary session of the General Assembly. The General Committee shall determine the agenda of the final plenary session. The General Committee shall not consider the substance of any issue, and shall meet at the request of the Secretary-General.

Comment -- The General Committee will order the resolutions passed by each Main Committee for the consideration of the plenary session.

Rule 10 -- Duties of the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, their committees and subcommittees. The Secretary-General may designate a member of the Secretariat to act in the place of the Secretary-General at these meetings. The Secretary-General shall provide and direct the staff required by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and any committees or subsidiary organs which they may establish.

Comment -- The term "Secretariat" refers collectively to those designated to act on behalf of the Secretary-General.

Rule 11 -- Statements by the Secretariat

The Secretary-General, or a member of the Secretariat designated by the Secretary-General as his or her representative, may make, at any time, either oral or written statements to any plenary meeting or any committee or subcommittee concerning any question under consideration by it.

Rule 12 -- Functions of the Chairman

The Chairman shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the committee, direct its discussions, ensure observance of the rules of procedure, accord the right to speak, put questions and announce decisions. The Chairman shall rule on points of order and, subject to these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings at any meeting and over the maintenance of order thereat. The Chairman may, in the course of the discussion of an item, propose to the committee the limitation of the time to be allowed to speakers, the closure of the list of speakers, or the closure of the debate. The Chairman may also propose the suspension or adjournment of the meeting or the adjournment of debate on the item under discussion.

Comment -- The Chairman shall have discretionary powers to entertain a motion, or suggest to the body that a motion would be in order, or choose not to entertain a motion and suggest that it be withdrawn. The Chairman may rule a motion out of order, thus disallowing that motion.

Rule 13 -- Invitation to Silent Prayer or Meditation

Immediately after the opening of the first plenary meeting and immediately preceding the closing of the final plenary meeting of each session of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, the Chairman shall invite representatives to observe a moment of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation.

Rule 14 -- Establishment of Committees and Subcommittees

The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council may establish such committees as they deem necessary for the performance of their functions. Each committee may set up subcommittees.

Rule 15 -- Notification Under Article 12 of the Charter

The Secretary-General, with the consent of the Security Council, shall notify the General Assembly, at each session, of any matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security which are under consideration by the Security Council, and shall similarly notify the General Assembly, or the Members of the

United Nations if the General Assembly is not in session, immediately when the Security Council ceases to consider such matters.

Comment -- Technically the General Assembly is not permitted to discuss or vote on an issue that is under consideration by the Security Council. However, in practice, the General Assembly both discusses and votes on different aspects of issues before the Security Council.

Rule 16 -- Provisional Agenda

The Provisional Agenda for a regular session of all committees and organs of the United Nations shall be drawn up by the Secretary-General and communicated to the Members of the United Nations at least sixty (60) days before the opening of the session.

Comment -- The Provisional Agenda is the topic list provided by the Directors of the committees. The order of the topics does not imply the order of the agenda.

Rule 17 -- Adoption of the Agenda

Each committee shall order the provisional agenda provided by the Secretary-General. A proposed agenda shall include all topics provided in the provisional agenda. It requires a simple majority to approve an agenda order and proposed agendas shall be voted upon in the order in which they were proposed.

Comment -- The first item of business for each committee will be to order its agenda. A speaker's list will be established for purposes of discussing the order of the agenda. After a sufficient number of speakers have spoken on the order of the agenda, a Member may move, from the floor, that a particular agenda order be adopted. If properly moved, an immediate procedural vote will be conducted. If the proposed agenda passes, debate on the order of the agenda will be deemed to have been closed, the speakers' list will be discarded, and the committee will begin consideration of the first agenda topic. If the proposed agenda fails, the committee will continue debate, using the same speakers list, until another order is proposed. If a proposed agenda fails, it may be reintroduced at a later time.

Rule 18 -- Change of Agenda

A committee may change the order in which it considers agenda topics. The Chairman may entertain one speaker for, and one against, a motion to change the order. A simple majority vote is required to change the order in which agenda topics will be discussed.

Comment -- A motion to change the order of the agenda may only be moved after a substantive topic has been closed and all related resolutions and amendments have been put to a vote. A motion to change the agenda may not be moved during the substantive debate of any topic.

Rule 19 -- Quorum

The Chairman may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed or a procedural vote to be taken when at least one-quarter of the members of the committee are present. The presence of a majority of the members of the committee shall be required for any substantive decision to be taken.

Comment -- Procedural votes refer to motions regarding the process of the discussion (e.g. a motion for recess, or closure of the speakers' list). Substantive votes address the substance of the topic under discussion (e.g. a vote on the contents of a resolution or amendment).

Rule 20 -- Speeches

No Member may address a committee without having previously obtained the permission of the Chairman. The Chairman shall take a speakers' list in the order in which the Members signify their desire to speak. The Chairman shall call a speaker to order if the speaker's remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

Comment -- Members may speak as often as they wish, however, Members must wait until they have already spoken before being placed on the speakers' list again.

Rule 21 -- Language and Interpretation

English shall be the official and the working language of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and their committees and subcommittees. Any Member may make a speech in any language other than the official language. In this case, the Member shall provide for simultaneous interpretation into the official language.

Comment -- The time required for translation and the original speech shall both be counted against the speaker's time.

Rule 22 -- Time Limit on Speeches

The Chairman may, upon consultation with the committee or as a result of a motion by a member of the committee, limit the time allowed to each speaker on any question. When debate is limited and a speaker exceeds the allotted time, the Chairman shall call that speaker to order without delay.

Rule 23 -- Questions to the Speaker

When the committee is engaged in substantive debate, a time limit has been placed on speeches, and the speaker has not exhausted the allotted time, the speaker may inform the Chairman that he or she will accept questions from the floor. At such time, the Chairman will recognize Members to pose substantive questions to the speaker on the issue under discussion. The speaker may at any time determine that he or she will cease accepting questions and thus conclude his or her remarks.

Comment -- A Member may only rise to pose questions to the speaker when:

- (a) the committee is debating a substantive issue;
- (b) a time limit has been placed on speeches;
- (c) the speaker has not exhausted his or her allotted time; and
- (d) the speaker has agreed to accept questions from the floor.

Questions addressed to the speaker shall relate directly to the substantive issue under discussion, requesting elucidation or clarification of a point made or a position taken by the speaker. The Member asking a question of the speaker may not engage the speaker in debate, but rather must phrase his or her point in the form of a question. The speaker may at any time decide to conclude his or her remarks and answers, notwithstanding that a question may remain unanswered. Members may want to keep their questions brief because a speaker's time shall be measured from the point at which the speaker takes the floor, and shall include the time used to ask a question. When a speaker's allotted time has elapsed, the Chairman shall promptly call the speaker to order.

Rule 24 -- Yields

When the time for speeches has been limited, a Member recognized to speak on a substantive issue may yield his or her remaining time to another Member. This Member may not yield any additional time.

Comment -- A representative may share her or his allotted time with another representative of the same Member State and this shall not count as a yield. A yield may be announced at any time before the speaker has left the floor. Yields may not be granted during procedural debate.

Rule 25 -- Closing the Speakers' List

The speakers' list may be closed at any time upon the majority vote of the Members present and voting.

Comment -- When a closed speakers' list is exhausted, debate automatically ends and an immediate vote is taken on all resolutions and amendments before the committee.

Rule 26 -- Reopening the Speakers' List

The speakers' list may be reopened by a vote of the Members provided that at least one speaker remains on the list at the time of the motion. One Member may speak in favor of and one opposed to this motion.

Comment -- If the motion is carried, additional Members may be added to the already existing speakers' list.

Rule 27 -- Right of Reply

If a speaker has impugned the national integrity of another Member State or observer, or the personal integrity of another representative, the Chairman may accord that Member or representative appropriate speaking time to exercise the right of reply.

Comment -- The right of reply is to be used to respond to the statements of the speaker. It may not be used to make corresponding, insulting remarks. It is granted at the discretion of the Chairman and should only be requested at the conclusion of the speaker's remarks.

Rule 28 -- Resolutions and Amendments

Resolutions and amendments shall normally be submitted in writing to the Chairman who shall circulate copies to the Members. No resolutions or amendments shall be voted upon unless copies of them have been made available to all Members.

Comment -- Any Member may submit an amendment or a resolution. Any Member may be added to the list of sponsors of a resolution or amendment at any time before the resolution or amendment is put to a vote. Sponsorship indicates support of and agreement with a resolution or amendment. Because of the limited resources of the conference, it is necessary to insure a minimum level of discussion of a resolution or amendment before it is produced for general distribution. Therefore, a resolution must have the signatures of one-fifth of the membership of the body (but not less than five Members) and amendments must have the signatures of one-tenth of the membership of the body (but not less than three Members). A "signature" does not indicate sponsorship of, nor even agreement with, a resolution or amendment. Rather, a signature is intended to mean that the Member desires the opportunity to discuss the resolution or amendment. A less formal draft of a resolution, often referred to as a working paper, may also be submitted to the Chairman for the purpose of making additional copies for wider distribution. Whether a working paper is copied and how many copies are made will be determined by the Chairman.

Rule 29 -- Competence

Any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the committee to adopt a resolution or amendment submitted to it shall be put to the vote before a vote is taken on the resolution or amendment in question.

Comment -- The Secretary-General has approved the competence of each committee to discuss the topic areas included in the provisional agenda. This rule serves to prevent the exercise of powers reserved exclusively for the Security Council by the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council. In this vote, an affirmative vote indicates that the body is NOT competent to pass the proposal and vice versa.

Rule 30 -- Withdrawal

A motion, resolution, or amendment may be withdrawn by its mover or sponsor(s) at any time before voting on the motion, resolution, or amendment has commenced. A motion, resolution, or amendment thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any Member. A resolution may not be withdrawn after it has been amended.

Comment -- In order to withdraw a resolution or an amendment, all sponsors must agree to the withdrawal.

Rule 31 -- Point of Order

During the discussion of any matter, a Member may rise to a point of order. A point of order is used only in the case of an error in the order of procedure and is used to bring the issue to the attention of the Chairman. A Member rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Comment -- If necessary, a point of order may interrupt a speaker.

Rule 32 -- Point of Parliamentary Inquiry

A Member may rise to a point of parliamentary inquiry when uncertain of the procedural setting of the committee. A Member may not interrupt a speaker on a point of parliamentary inquiry.

Comment -- Representatives may use this point to have the Chairman explain any procedural matter. A point of parliamentary inquiry may be raised during voting procedure.

Rule 33 -- Point of Personal Privilege

A Member may rise to a point of personal privilege in order to bring to the attention of the Chairman some physical discomfort which is disrupting the proper functioning of the committee. A point of personal privilege may interrupt a speaker.

Comment -- A representative may rise to a point of personal privilege when he or she is unable to hear the Chairman or speaker or for other physical reasons which may impair the representative's ability to participate in or listen to the debate.

Rule 34 -- Appeal

A Member may appeal a discretionary ruling of the Chairman. The Member may explain the appeal and the Chairman may explain the basis of the ruling. The Chairman's ruling will stand unless overruled by a majority of the Members present and voting.

Comment -- Voting "yes" on this motion means a Member wishes to overrule the decision of the Chairman. Voting "no" means the Member wishes to uphold the ruling.

Rule 35 -- Recess of the Meeting

During the discussion of any matter, a Member may move to recess the meeting. Such a motion shall include the proposed length of such recess and shall not be debated but immediately shall be put to the vote.

Comment -- Recess of the meeting is used for caucusing, meal breaks and the evening break. Normally, a recess for the purpose of caucusing should not exceed twenty minutes. When the motion to recess is made, the Chairman may suggest a different time period for the suspension. A simple majority is required to pass a motion to recess.

Rule 36 -- Closure of Debate

A Member may at any time move the closure of the debate on the item under consideration, whether or not any other Member has signified his or her wish to speak. Permission to speak on the closure of the debate shall be accorded only to two Members opposing the closure, after which the motion immediately shall be put to the vote. If two-thirds of the committee is in favor of the closure, the Chairman shall declare the closure of the debate.

Comment -- Closure of debate is used to end discussion of a topic area. When debate is closed, the committee must move to an immediate vote on the resolution(s) and amendment(s) under that topic area. Motions for closure of debate are generally out of order until there has been a full discussion of the issue by the committee. The speakers' list will be discarded following passage of a motion to close debate. The speakers' list will not be carried over for other substantive or procedural debate.

Rule 37 -- Adjournment of Debate

During the discussion of any matter, a Member may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. Two Members may speak in favor of, and two against, the motion after which the motion immediately shall be put to the vote.

Comment -- Adjournment of debate is used to end discussion of a topic area. Adjournment of debate is sometimes referred to as "tabling" debate on the topic area. When debate is adjourned, the resolution(s) and amendment(s) under that topic area are not voted on. A topic area which has been adjourned may only be reconsidered in accordance with Rule 49.

Rule 38 -- Adjournment of Session

The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council may each decide at any session to adjourn temporarily and resume the meeting at a later date.

Comment -- Unlike recess, adjournment is only appropriate at the final closing of committee sessions and at the close of the conference. This is a procedural motion and requires the approval of the Chairman.

Rule 39 -- Order of Procedural Motions

The motions indicated below shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the committee:

- (a) to recess the meeting (Rule 35);
- (b) to adjourn the session (Rule 38);
- (c) to adjourn the debate on the item under discussion (Rule 37);
- (d) to close debate on the item under discussion (Rule 36).

Rule 40 -- Voting Rights

Each Member of the United Nations shall have one vote.

Comment -- Observer delegations may not vote on substantive issues, but may vote on procedural motions.

Rule 41 -- Meaning of the Phrase "Members Present and Voting"

For the purposes of these rules, the phrase "Members present and voting" means Members casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members who abstain from voting are considered as not voting.

Comment -- Abstentions will not be called for in procedural votes.

Rule 42 -- Simple Majority

Decisions of committees on questions other than those provided for in Rules 36, 48, and 49, including the determination of additional categories of questions to be decided by a two-thirds majority, shall be made by a majority of the Members present and voting. If a vote is equally divided, the motion, resolution, or amendment fails.

Rule 43 -- Method of Voting

The General Assembly shall normally vote by show of placards, but any Member may request a roll-call vote on a resolution or amendment. The roll-call shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Members, beginning with the Member whose name is drawn by lot by the Chairman. The name of each Member shall be called in any roll-call, and one of the Member State's representatives shall reply "yes," "no," or "abstention." Members may pass in the order of a vote once per vote. The Chairman may allow Members to explain their vote after a roll-call vote. The Chairman shall not permit the sponsors of a resolution or amendment to explain their vote on their own resolution or amendment. The result of the voting shall be inserted in the record in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Members.

Comment -- The Chairman may require that a motion for a roll-call vote be supported by as much as one-fifth of the committee. While abstentions do not count as votes for purposes of determining a majority (Rule 41), Members abstaining from a vote may request the right to explain their abstention, provided that they were not the sponsor of the resolution or amendment. Roll-call votes may not be taken on procedural motions.

Rule 44 -- Conduct During the Voting

After the Chairman has announced the beginning of voting, no Member shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting or on a point of parliamentary inquiry.

Comment -- During a vote, representatives should maintain proper decorum; no caucusing should take place, no notes should be passed, and no representatives should enter or leave the room.

Rule 45 -- Division of Resolutions and Amendments

(a) A Member may move that the operative clauses of a resolution or amendment be voted on separately. If objection is made to the motion for division, the motion to divide shall be voted on. This is a procedural vote. Permission to speak on the motion for division may be granted to two speakers for and two speakers against the motion.

(b) If the motion for division is carried, a substantive vote shall be taken on each of the divided parts.

(c) Those parts which are approved shall then be voted on as a whole. This shall be a substantive vote. If all operative parts of the resolution or amendment have been rejected, the resolution or amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

(d) In the event of several motions for division, the Chairman shall order the motions, selecting that motion which divides the resolution or amendment into the most parts first. A successful motion for division will supersede later conflicting motions.

Comment -- This action consists of three stages, one procedural and two substantive:

- (1) The vote on whether the resolution or amendment will be divided at all; this is a procedural vote;
- (2) The vote on each of the divided operative parts; these are substantive votes;
- (3) The final vote on all of the accepted parts as a whole; this is a substantive vote.

Pre-ambulatory clauses may not be divided. A motion for division must delineate the placement of each operative clause. Only clauses that are distinctly specified within the resolution or amendment may be divided.

Rule 46 -- Voting on Amendments

A motion is considered an amendment to a resolution if it adds to, deletes from or revises part of the resolution. When an amendment to a resolution is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments to a resolution are moved, the committee shall first vote on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original resolution and then on the amendment next furthest removed there from, and so on until all of the amendments have been put to a vote. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter amendment shall not be put to a vote. If any amendments are adopted, the amended resolution shall then be voted upon.

Comment -- Amendments will be voted upon after debate on the topic area has been closed and immediately before the vote on the relevant resolution. Pre-ambulatory clauses may not be amended. Technically, there are no "friendly amendments." However, if all of the sponsors of a resolution agree that a certain change to a proposed resolution is desirable, with the concurrence of the Chairman, the sponsors may withdraw the original resolution and submit a "new" resolution, as changed. All other amendments must be put to a vote. The Chairman shall determine the order of voting on the amendments and when one amendment implies the rejection of another.

Rule 47 -- Voting on Resolutions

If two or more resolutions relate to the same question, the committee shall, unless it decides otherwise, vote on the resolutions in the order in which they have been submitted. The Committee may, after each vote on a resolution, decide whether to vote on the next resolution.

Comment -- It requires a majority vote to change the order in which a committee considers resolutions.

Rule 48 - Important Questions

Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting. These questions shall include: recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the suspension of the rights and privileges of membership, the expulsion of Members, questions relating to the operation of the trusteeship system, and budgetary questions. Any Member may move to consider a resolution an important question. Two Members may speak in favor of and two against the motion. It shall require a simple majority vote to consider a resolution as an important question.

Comment -- The Chairman will not determine the existence of an important question; it requires the initiative of the committee. Only when a resolution is in its final form may a motion be made to consider it an important question (i.e., after voting on amendments and division is completed).

Rule 49 -- Reconsideration

When a resolution has been adopted or rejected or when debate on a topic area has been adjourned, it may not be reconsidered at the same session unless the committee, by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider may be accorded only to one speaker in favor of the motion, and one opposing the motion, after which the motion immediately shall be put to the vote.

Comment -- This rule may be used to reconsider specific resolutions upon which an actual vote has been taken or entire topic areas upon which debate was adjourned. It may not be used to reconsider entire topic areas upon which debate was closed and a vote was taken on the resolution(s) and amendment(s). As a practical matter, a motion to reconsider a resolution should be made only by a Member who voted with the originally prevailing side.